



Shepherd Rams

Shepherd University Athletics Strategic Plan 2025-2030



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Introduction from the AD

The Shepherd University athletics department sponsors 13 varsity sports and provides a competitive experience for 350 student-athletes. The Rams are a member of the NCAA Division II and compete in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC).

I am proud to say our athletics department has celebrated numerous athletic and academic successes and our student-athletes compete at the highest level. Not only are they successful in the classroom and in their sport, but they are also community service orientated and engaged within the campus and local community. The athletics department brings a vibrant atmosphere to Shepherd University and the community. We prioritize our relationships with donors, sponsors, fans, and alumni as their support is critical to our continued success.

The Rams athletic department has a solid foundation in which to build on moving forward. Our strategic plan uses a comprehensive approach to focus on specific priorities and goals to elevate the level of performance within the department. We prioritize our student-athletes and want to make sure they have a well-rounded experience developing specific skills to ensure current and future success. The strategic plan creates annual benchmarks establishing an ongoing commitment to our student-athletes.

Rams athletics are a valued part of the campus community, bringing brand recognition to the University. Shepherd University student-athletes are committed, disciplined, passionate, and resilient. Please join us as we aim high and together, we can achieve more!

Go Rams!

Carrie Bodkins

Director of Athletics



Current Mission

Shepherd University athletics provides an opportunity for committed student-athletes to develop both in the classroom and on the fields of competition. Our mission is to provide a solid foundation for our student-athletes as we guide them to become leaders of tomorrow.

We will recruit and train student-athletes as pillars of communities molding them into strong alumni which Shepherd University can look proudly upon. Our dedicated student-athletes will consistently progress to the best of what Shepherd University has to offer as students and athletes.



Accountability and respect are core values of all Rams which guide our competitive spirit. The athletics department will adhere to all rules that govern the PSAC and NCAA Division II and will be open with all policies and procedures by which we govern to promote the mission of Shepherd University.

Vision and Tagline



Vision

Shepherd University aims to achieve athletic success by bringing brand recognition to the University through NCAA National appearances, establishing ourselves as one of the top programs in the PSAC, celebrating academic successes, and graduating our student-athletes.

Tagline

Aim high and together we achieve more!

Priorities



Academic Achievement

Shepherd University strives to bring the highest level of academic success and is committed to graduating our student-athletes. We prepare our student-athletes for life after graduation.



Competitive Success

The Rams are committed to the competitive success of our athletics programs and will represent the University positively. The University supports the athletics department by providing the resources needed and the staffing to be competitive in the PSAC.



Student Athlete Experience

Shepherd University prioritizes the student-athlete experience providing essential resources to create numerous opportunities. These include opportunities for personal growth and achievement, development of valuable life skills, and building strong personal connections.



External Connectivity

The Shepherd University athletics department fosters relationships within the campus community and the local community. We work with boosters, sponsors, and donors to provide financial support to individual programs and the department. Athletics markets all teams and continues to build a strong brand that brings brand recognition to the entire University.



Program Integrity

The Shepherd University athletics department is an integral part of the campus community. The department will follow all NCAA Division II membership requirements and bylaws and all PSAC policies and procedures. Athletics is dedicated to gender equity, the financial stability of the department, and the health, safety, and well-being of our student-athletes.



Academic Achievement

- Graduate most of our student-athletes who have exhausted all eligibility.
- Improve our academic success rate within the PSAC.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and above for the athletic department.
- Strengthen relationships with academic advisors and faculty.
- Provide personal growth opportunities such as work force ready programming and connecting with alumni.
- Ensure we recognize and promote academic success within our campus, PSAC, and NCAA Division II.
- Provide the necessary academic support to promote academic achievement and graduation.





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Competitive Success

- **Compete at the highest level within the PSAC and NCAA Division II.**
- **Allocate financial resources to achieve competitive expectations.**
- **Continue to recruit high level student-athletes.**
- **Improve retention of student-athletes.**
- **Hire and retain talented coaches and staff with the holistic approach of Shepherd Athletics.**
- **Develop an athletics facilities master plan to target facility improvements and additional facilities.**
- **Create an incentive performance program for coaches and staff.**

Student-Athlete Experience



- **Provide athletic wellness opportunities to promote the well-being of our student-athletes.**
- **Furnish modern and up to date facilities, equipment, and programming to support physical health.**
- **Ensure safe and healthy environments providing the necessary resources and staff to support mental health.**
- **Encourage cross-campus connections to integrate the student-athlete completely within the campus community.**
- **Provide opportunities for community service and engagement to give back to the community and promote Shepherd athletics.**
- **Continue to support leadership opportunities in Student Athlete Advisory Committee.**

External Connectivity

- Capitalize on creative marketing strategies by introducing new sponsorship initiatives.
- Develop a robust fundraising plan.
- Identify and solicit new revenue sources.
- Cultivate relationships and solicit athletic donors.
- Integrate more alumni events to encourage engagement and support, especially with younger graduates.
- Create a fan friendly atmosphere with promotional events to improve fan attendance and game day experience.



Program Integrity



- **Complete action items in the Gender Equity Action plan and review annually.**
- **Continue annual assessments of the student-athlete experience through surveys.**
- **Improve NCAA compliance policies and procedures while strengthening the educational programming with athletic staff, student-athletes, and across campus.**
- **Increase athletic department revenue.**
- **Create a budget that shows fiscal responsibility while meeting the needs of the department and each of its athletic programs.**



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